IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A network for distributing information, between a central unit and stations, comprising:

information splitting devices with inputs/outputs connected to the central unit and to the stations, an interface device in each station,

wherein the interface device of each station is linked to a first splitting device and to a second splitting device by the interface device of at least one additional station,

wherein protocol exchanges between the central unit and the interface device are organized such that the central unit can determine whether a terminal is faulty, an interface is faulty, or the splitting device is faulty, and

wherein each splitting device is configured to support a higher bit rate than the nominal bit rate of the splitting device, and

when the central unit determines that the terminal, the interface or the splitting device is faulty, a network load is distributed to each non-faulty splitting device such that the bit rate increase in each non-faulty splitting device is less than the nominal bit rate.

Claim 2 (Previously Presented): The network as claimed in claim 1, wherein plural interface devices are mounted in cascade on a link starting from a splitting device.

Claim 3 (Previously Presented): The network as claimed in claim 1, wherein an interface device comprises a means for detecting a fault relating to a problem on a link between this interface device and the first or the second splitting device.

Claim 4 (Previously Presented): The network as claimed in claim 3, wherein the means for detecting faults comprises means for mutual acknowledgement with the central unit.

Claim 5 (Previously Presented): The network as claimed in claim 1, further comprising a device for switching over from the first splitting device to the second splitting device.

Claim 6 (Previously Presented): The network as claimed in claim 5, wherein the switching device is in the central unit.

Claim 7 (Previously Presented): The network as claimed in claim 1, wherein a link between a splitting device and an interface device is effected with a cable having two twisted conductors.

Claim 8 (Previously Presented): The network as claimed in claim 1, wherein a splitting device is linked by a link connected to one of its inputs/outputs to a single special interface device, this special interface device being linked by another link connected to another input/output of another splitting device.

Claim 9 (Cancelled).

Claim 10 (Previously Presented): The network as claimed in claim 1, wherein addresses used to identify elements of the network comprise fields of which a first field makes it possible to identify a group of stations connected to a splitting device identified by a

second field and that a modification of a value of the second field makes it possible to connect the group of stations to another splitting device.

Claim 11 (Previously Presented): A process for splitting the effects of a fault in a network for distributing information among terminals, wherein

N splitting devices are linked, according to a star topology, to a central unit with an aid of transport means over each of which a primary stream travels, to a splitting device of rank m corresponding to a primary stream FP_m,

the splitting devices are furnished with first inputs/outputs A_1 to A_i and with second inputs/outputs B_1 to B_j,

the first inputs/outputs A_1 to A_i of a splitting device K are linked by buses K_1 to K_i to the second inputs/outputs B_1 to B_i of a consecutive splitting device K + 1, with $1 \leq K \leq N$,

terminals are linked in cascade to each bus K_1 to K_i,

the first inputs/outputs A_1 to A_i of the splitting devices 1 to N are activated,

upon a fault between a terminal linked by a splitting device K to the central unit, a first input/output A_1 to A_i of the splitting device K is deactivated,

a second input/output B_1 to B_i of the splitting device K + 1 is activated.

Claim 12 (Previously Presented): The process as claimed in claim 11, wherein

upon an event relating to the splitting device K, the first inputs/outputs A_1 to A_i of the splitting devices K + 1 to N are deactivated,

the second inputs/outputs B_1 to B_i of the splitting devices K + 1 to N are activated.

Claim 13 (Previously Presented): The process as claimed in claim 11, wherein

upon a fault, some of the first inputs/outputs A_1 to A_i of the splitting device K + 1 are activated.

Claim 14 (Previously Presented): The process as claimed in claim 11, wherein

upon another event relating to a splitting device K ± n, a number of first inputs/outputs and a number of second inputs/outputs to be activated for each of a number of devices available between the splitting devices K and K ± n are determined as a function of these available devices, this number being different by one unit at most between two available devices,

inputs/outputs thus determined from among the inputs/outputs A_1 to A_i and or B_1 to B_i are activated.

Claim 15 (Currently Amended): A network for distributing information, between a central unit and stations, comprising:

information splitting devices with inputs/outputs connected to the central unit and to the stations, each station includes an interface device,

wherein the interface device of each station is linked to a first splitting device and to a second splitting device via an interface device of at least one additional station,

wherein plural interface devices are mounted in cascade on a link starting from a splitting device, and

wherein each splitting device is configured to support a higher bit rate than the nominal bit rate of the splitting device, and

when the central unit determines that a station or splitting device is faulty, a network load is distributed to each non-faulty splitting device such that the bit rate increase in each non-faulty splitting device is less than the nominal bit rate.

Claim 16 (Previously Presented): The network as claimed in claim 15, wherein an interface device comprises a means for detecting a fault relating to a problem on a link between this interface device and the first or the second splitting device.

Claim 17 (Previously Presented): The network as claimed in claim 16, wherein the means for detecting faults comprises means for mutual acknowledgement with the central unit.

Claim 18 (Previously Presented): The network as claimed in claim 15, further comprising a device for switching over from the first splitting device to the second splitting device.

Claim 19 (Previously Presented): The network as claimed in claim 18, wherein the switching device is in the central unit.

Claim 20 (Previously Presented): The network as claimed in claim 15, wherein a link between a splitting device and an interface device is effected with a cable having two twisted conductors.

Claim 21 (Previously Presented): The network as claimed in claim 15, wherein a splitting device is linked by a link connected to one of its inputs/outputs to a single special interface device, this special interface device being linked by another link connected to another input/output of another splitting device.

Claim 22 (Cancelled).

Claim 23 (Previously Presented): The network as claimed in claim 15, wherein addresses used to identify elements of the network comprise fields of which a first field makes it possible to identify a group of stations connected to a splitting device identified by a second field and that a modification of a value of the second field makes it possible to connect the group of stations to another splitting device.

Claim 24 (Previously Presented): The network as claimed in claim 1, wherein the splitting device is capable of supporting a bit rate of two times a nominal bit rate of the splitting device.

Claim 25 (Previously Presented): The network as claimed in claim 15, wherein the splitting device is capable of supporting a bit rate of two times a nominal bit rate of the splitting device.